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International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

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I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2012, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-seventh session the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item at its 8th, 9th, 10th and 15th meetings, on 17, 18 and 19 October and 2 November 2012 (see A/C.4/67/SR.8, 9, 10 and 15).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/67/20).

4. At its 1st meeting, on 4 October, the Committee decided to establish a Working Group of the Whole on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, to be chaired by the delegation of Japan, to prepare proposals to be submitted under the item.

5. At the 8th meeting, on 17 October, the Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space introduced the report of that Committee (see A/C.4/67/SR.8).

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II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolution A/C.4/67/L.2/Rev.1

6. At the 15th meeting, on 2 November, the representative of Japan, in his capacity as Chair of the Working Group of the Whole, introduced a draft resolution, entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" (A/C.4/67/L.2/Rev.1).

7. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

8. Also at its 15th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/67/L.2/Rev.1 without a vote (see para. 15).

B. Draft decision A/C.4/67/L.7

9. At its 15th meeting, on 2 November, the Committee had before it a draft decision entitled "Increase in the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space" (A/C.4/67/L.7) submitted by Armenia, Costa Rica and Jordan.

10. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

11. At the same meeting, the representative of Azerbaijan proposed an amendment to draft decision A/C.4/67/L.7, by which the word "Armenia" would be deleted from the operative paragraph.

12. At the same meeting, the representative of Armenia requested a separate vote on the amendment to the draft decision.

13. Also at the same meeting, the Committee voted on the amendment proposed by the representative of Azerbaijan. The amendment was rejected by a recorded vote of 85 to 6, with 27 abstentions. The voting was as follows:[1]

In favour:

Azerbaijan, Gabon, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates.

Against:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain,

[1] The delegations of Afghanistan, Gabon, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Niger and Tajikistan subsequently indicated that they had intended to vote against the amendment. The delegations of Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates subsequently indicated that they had intended to abstain.

Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam.

Abstaining:

Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Fiji, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Tunisia, Tuvalu, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia.

14. Also at its 15th meeting, the Committee adopted draft decision A/C.4/67/L.7 by a recorded vote of 127 to 1, with 3 abstentions (see para. 16). The voting was as follows:[2]

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

Against:

Fiji.

Abstaining:

Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Turkey.

[2] The delegations of Afghanistan, Fiji, Mauritania, Mongolia and Tajikistan subsequently indicated that they had intended to vote in favour.

III. Recommendations of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

15. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999, 59/2 of 20 October 2004, 61/110 and 61/111 of 14 December 2006, 62/101 of 17 December 2007, 62/217 of 22 December 2007, 65/97 of 10 December 2010, 65/271 of 7 April 2011 and 66/71 of 9 December 2011,

Recognizing the extraordinary achievements made over the past fifty years in human space flight and space exploration for peaceful purposes, noting the unique platform at the global level for international cooperation in space activities represented by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and recalling in that regard the Declaration on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Human Space Flight and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,[1]

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges, especially for developing countries,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies,[2]

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Recognizing also that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of

[1] Resolution 66/71, annex.

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843.

further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

Convinced of the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[3]

Seriously concerned about the devastating impact of disasters,[4]

Desirous of enhancing international coordination and cooperation at the global level in disaster management and emergency response through greater access to and use of space-based services for all countries and facilitating capacity-building and institutional strengthening for disaster management, in particular in developing countries,

Deeply convinced that the use of space science and technology and their applications in areas such as telehealth, tele-education, disaster management, environmental protection and other Earth observation applications contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, particularly poverty eradication,

Welcoming, in that regard, the fact that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, recognized the important role that space science and technology play in promoting sustainable development,[5]

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its fifty-fifth session,[6]

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its fifty-fifth session;[6]

2. *Agrees* that the Committee, at its fifty-sixth session, should consider the substantive items recommended at its fifty-fifth session,[7] taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries;

3. *Notes* that, at its fifty-first session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee continued its work,[8] as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/71;

4. *Agrees* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its fifty-second session, should consider the substantive items and reconvene the working groups recommended by the Committee,[9] taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries;

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[3] Resolution 55/2.

[4] The term "disasters" refers to natural or technological disasters.

[5] Resolution 66/288, annex, para. 274.

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/67/20).

[7] Ibid., para. 345.

[8] Ibid., chap. II.D; and A/AC.105/1003.

[9] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/67/20), paras. 254-258.

5. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space[10] to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties in accordance with their national law, as well as incorporating them into their national legislation;

6. *Notes* that, at its forty-ninth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee continued its work,[11] as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/71;

7. *Agrees* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fiftieth session, should consider the substantive items and reconvene the working groups recommended by the Committee,[12] taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries;

8. *Notes with appreciation* that some States are already implementing space debris mitigation measures on a voluntary basis, through national mechanisms and consistent with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee and with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,[13] endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/217;

9. *Invites* other States to implement, through relevant national mechanisms, the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;

10. *Considers* that it is essential that States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

11. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

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[10] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 672, No. 9574); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 961, No. 13810); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1023, No. 15020); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1363, No. 23002).

[11] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/67/20), chap. II.C; and A/AC.105/1001.

[12] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/67/20), paras. 190-195.

[13] Ibid., *Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/62/20), paras. 117 and 118, and annex.

12. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2013, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications and endorsed by the Committee;[14]

13. *Urges* all Member States to continue to contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in order to enhance the capacity of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat to provide technical and legal advisory services in its priority thematic areas;

14. *Notes with satisfaction* the progress made within the framework of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), and encourages Member States, on a voluntary basis, to provide the programme with the necessary additional resources to ensure that greater support may be provided to Member States by UN-SPIDER and its regional support offices;

15. *Notes with appreciation* the continuous progress made by the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems towards achieving compatibility and interoperability among global and regional space-based positioning, navigation and timing systems and in the promotion of the use of global navigation satellite systems and their integration into national infrastructure, particularly in developing countries, and also notes with appreciation that the International Committee held its seventh meeting in Beijing from 5 to 9 November 2012;

16. *Also notes with appreciation* that the African regional centres for space science and technology education in the French and English languages, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, as well as the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, located in India, and the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, with campuses located in Brazil and Mexico, affiliated to the United Nations, have continued their education programmes in 2012, and agrees that the regional centres should continue to report to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on their activities;

17. *Welcomes* in that regard the establishment, in 2012, of the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Western Asia, affiliated to the United Nations, and located in Jordan;

18. *Emphasizes* that regional and interregional cooperation in the field of space activities is essential to strengthen the peaceful uses of outer space, assist States in the development of their space capabilities and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[3] and to that end requests relevant regional organizations to offer the assistance necessary so that countries can carry out the recommendations of regional conferences;

19. *Recognizes*, in that regard, the important role played by conferences and other mechanisms in strengthening regional and international cooperation among States, such as the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development, the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization and the Space Conference of the Americas;

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[14] Ibid., *Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/67/20)*, para. 89; and A/AC.105/1011, sects. II and III, and annex III.

20. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, and agrees that during its consideration of the matter the Committee could continue to consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation and the role that space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

21. *Reiterates* that space science and technology and their applications make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare, as indicated in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted on 30 July 1999 by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III),[15] and General Assembly resolution 59/2, and recalls that a number of the recommendations set out in the plan of action of the Committee on the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference[16] have been implemented and that satisfactory progress is being made in implementing the outstanding recommendations through national and regional activities;

22. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in developing countries;

23. *Notes with appreciation* that the Group on Earth Observations made a contribution to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development by addressing issues related to the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development;

24. *Reiterates* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should continue to be brought to the attention, in particular, of the major United Nations conferences and summits for economic, social and cultural development and related fields and that the use of space technology should be promoted in efforts towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and summits and implementing the Millennium Declaration;

25. *Welcomes* the increased efforts to strengthen further the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, and urges entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting, to continue to examine, in cooperation with the Committee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to implementing the Millennium Declaration on the development agenda, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;

26. *Requests* the entities of the United Nations system, other international organizations and the Secretary-General to continue and, where appropriate, to enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with reports on the issues dealt with in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

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[15] *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

[16] See A/59/174, sect. VI.B.

27. *Notes* that, in accordance with the agreement reached by the Committee at its forty-sixth session on the measures relating to the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[17] on the basis of the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[18] the African States, the Eastern European States and the Western European and other States nominated their candidates for the offices of Chair of the Committee, Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Chair of the Legal Subcommittee, respectively, for the period 2014-2015;[19]

28. *Urges* the Asia-Pacific States and the Latin American and Caribbean States to nominate their candidates for the offices of Second Vice-Chair/Rapporteur of the Committee and First Vice-Chair of the Committee, respectively, for the period 2014-2015 before the next session of the Committee;

29. *Agrees* that, upon the nomination of the candidates of the Asia-Pacific States and the Latin American and Caribbean States, the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, at their respective sessions in 2014, should elect their officers nominated for the period 2014-2015;

30. *Endorses* the decision of the Committee to grant permanent observer status to the Ibero-American Institute of Aeronautic and Space Law and Commercial Aviation[20] and the Scientific Committee on Solar-Terrestrial Physics;[21]

31. *Encourages* the regional groups to promote participation in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies by the States members of the Committee that are also members of the respective regional groups.

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[17] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, paras. 4-9.

[18] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/52/20), annex I; and ibid., *Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, appendix III.

[19] Ibid., *Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/67/20), paras. 328, 330 and 331.

[20] Ibid., paras. 333 and 334.

[21] Ibid., paras. 335 and 336.

16. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision.

Increase in the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

The General Assembly decides to appoint Armenia, Costa Rica and Jordan as members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.